

Physician Satisfaction: Fostering a Culture of Teamwork

Avoyelles Hospital, Marksville, Louisiana

In most markets, it is the physician that keeps the hospital inpatient and outpatient services full. Without a doubt, keeping physicians involved and supportive of your hospital is the right thing to do. So, what needs to be in place to ensure a culture of teamwork? We looked closer at Avoyelles Hospital, located in Marksville, Louisiana, who is a high performer in physician satisfaction. We asked CEO David Mitchel and Cindy Juneau, Quality Manager of Medical Staff, to share Avoyelles' keys to success in achieving high physician satisfaction score.

Percentage of Physicians 'Very Satisfied' With Overall Indicators

HealthStream Research

HealthStream Research is a national leader in the measurement of physician, employee, patient, and community satisfaction for healthcare organizations. We currently work with more than 1,100 facilities nationwide, including many of the nation's largest for-profit and not-for-profit health systems and specialty healthcare companies.

Overall Indicators	HealthStream Research Norm	Avoyelles Hospital
Overall Satisfaction With Hospital	26%	67%
Overall Satisfaction with Nursing	24%	58%

*Scores based on March 2006
survey results*

When David Mitchel joined Avoyelles in 1989 one of his first tasks was to recruit new physicians, which can be a tough job in a small community hospital. "Locating the right person to fit the mold of our community is quite a challenge," notes David. However, the physicians and administration at Avoyelles have worked together to find the right people. David describes the medical staff at Avoyelles as "one that works as a team, with no hierarchy or squabbling." Having a group of physicians that work well together has definitely aided in the ability to keep physicians satisfied at Avoyelles.

However, David and Cindy explain that the level of involvement their physicians have with key decisions regarding the hospital has helped foster this culture of teamwork at Avoyelles. "We host an annual medical staff and board retreat each year at an off-site location. The purpose is two-fold...to educate our physicians on new trends in healthcare, and to discuss the long-term plans and goals for the hospital," describes David.

Success Story: Avoyelles Hospital

Another aspect that contributes to Avoyelles' success is the employee population. "Many of our employees have been with the hospital for 20 or more years. They have the hospital's best interest at heart," indicates Cindy. Thus the physicians and employees at Avoyelles have personal relationships and a level of trust that is scarce in today's healthcare industry.

When asked about words of wisdom for other CEOs dealing with physician satisfaction, David provided a few key points:

- Respect your physicians
- Be responsive to physicians; let them know that administration will address their issues
- Be available *and* accessible
- Determine key priorities by sitting down with physicians to hear their concerns

It is evident that the management team at Avoyelles Hospital has created a unique culture that fosters physician satisfaction. In the words of CEO David Mitchel, "We must have respect for physicians – they're special people. We can't overlook the dedication they have or the trials they endure."